

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for providing services on a distributed computing network, comprising the steps of:

5 connecting a first device containing an application associated with a service to a distributed computing network;

reading from said first device a first set of information that is published on the network to provide clients with access to the service, and an address associated with a second set of information that is published on the network to provide clients with access to the service;

10 using said address to read said second set of information from a second device connected to the network; and

publishing a service bundle on said network that contains at least some of the information from each of said first and second sets of information.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first set of information contains data which is specific to the implementation of the application on said first device, and said second set of information contains data which is generic to multiple implementations of the application.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said first device is a smart card.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said smart card is connected to the network by means of a terminal, and wherein some of the information read from said second device comprises a proxy for said application, and further including the step of executing said proxy in said terminal to enable said terminal to function as a gateway for the application on the network.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said proxy operates to convert calls received from clients via the network into commands that are appropriate to the application.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said application is written in an
5 object-oriented program language, and said proxy converts requests for remote method invocation into low-level commands for communication with a smart card.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said first device is a personal digital assistant.

8. The method of claim 1 further including the step of validating said
10 second set of information with information stored in said first device prior to publishing said service bundle.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said second set of information includes a digital signature, and said validating step comprises authentication of said signature by means of a key stored on said first device.

15 10. The method of claim 8 wherein said second set of information is encrypted, and said validating step comprises decrypting said information using a key stored on said first device.

11. A method for providing services via a smart card on a distributed computing network, comprising the steps of:

20 placing a smart card containing an application that is associated with a service in communication with a first device on the network;
reading an address from the smart card;

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using said address to obtain a proxy for said application from a second device on the network; and
executing said proxy on said first device to thereby enable said first device to operate as a gateway which receives calls for said application from clients on the network and converts said calls into commands that are transmitted to the card for processing by said application.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said first device is a terminal to which said smart card is physically connected.

10 13. The method of claim 11 wherein said application is written in an object-oriented program language, and said proxy converts requests for remote method invocation into low-level commands for communication with a smart card.

14. A portable service provider that is connectable to a distributed computing network, said portable service provider including a memory having stored therein:

15 an application program that provides services to clients via said network;
a first set of information that is published on the network to provide clients with access to the service provided by said application program; and
an address for a location on the network at which is stored a second set of information that is published on the network to provide clients with access to said service.

20 15. The portable service provider of claim 14 wherein said first set of information contains data which is specific to the implementation of the application on said service provider, and said second set of information contains data which is generic to multiple implementations of the application.

16. The portable service provider of claim 14 wherein said service provider is a smart card.

17. The portable service provider of claim 14 wherein said service provider is a personal digital assistant.

5 18. The portable service provider of claim 14 wherein said memory further stores a private key for validating said second set of information.

10 19. A distributed computing network, comprising:
a first device that publishes information that enables clients on said network to access services available via said network;
a second device that stores a first portion of said information; and
a third device that communicates with a portable service provider containing an application that provides services via said network, said third device being operable to retrieve a second portion of said information from said portable service provider, read an address stored in said portable service provider that identifies a location at which said first portion of said information is stored, retrieve said first portion of said information stored at said address, and provide said first and second portions of said information to said first device for publication on the network.

15 20. The distributed computing network of claim 19 wherein said portable service provider is a smart card, and said third device is a terminal to which a smart card can be connected.

21. The distributed computing network of claim 20 wherein some of the information contained in said first portion comprises a proxy for said application, and said terminal executes said proxy to function as a gateway for the application on the network.

5 22. The distributed computing network of claim 21 wherein said proxy operates to convert calls received from clients via the network into commands that are appropriate to the application.

10 23. The distributed computing network of claim 22 wherein said application is written in an object-oriented program language, and said proxy converts requests for remote method invocation into low-level commands for communication with a smart card.

24. The distributed computing network of claim 19, wherein said third device combines the retrieved first and second portions of information into a service bundle that is provided to said first device for publication.

15 25. The distributed computing network of claim 19 wherein said first portion of said information comprises data which is generic to multiple implementations of said application, and said second portion of said information comprises data that is specific to the implementation of the application on a given portable service provider.

20 26. A distributed computing network, comprising:
a first device that stores a proxy for an application stored on a portable service provider; and

a second device that communicates with a portable service provider, and
that is operable to read an address stored in said portable service provider that
identifies a location at which said proxy is stored, retrieve said proxy stored at said
address, and execute said proxy to function as a gateway which receives calls for
5 said application from clients on the network and converts said calls into commands
that are transmitted to said portable service provider for processing by said
application.

27. The distributed computing network of claim 26 wherein the portable
service provider is a smart card and said second device is a terminal to which a
10 smart card can be connected.

28. The distributed computing network of claim 26, wherein said
application is written in an object-oriented program language, and said proxy
converts requests for remote method invocation into low-level commands for
communication with a portable service provider.